

Appl. No. 10/678,522
Amdt. Dated Aug. 23, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Jun. 9, 2005

REMARKS

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102

Claims 1-5, 8-12, and 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Simpson et al. '672.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with Examiner for the reasons as follows.

Regarding independent claim 1, a supporting plate as defined therein comprises a main body having a plurality of wing panels extending from the main body, and the wing panels slope down.

Simpson et al. '672 discloses that a plurality of shelf members 150, each shelf member 150 has body portion 182 with an inwardly projecting shelf portion 180, shelf portion 180 is canted slightly upward from web portion to edge portion 184 (as described in the paragraph [0025] of the specification in conjunction with shown in FIGS. 4-7 in Simpson et al. '672). It is clear that the shelf portion 180 disclosed in Simpson et al. '672 supports the center of the wafer as far toward as possible by the edge portion 184 of the shelf portion and can NOT support the edge of the wafers or substrates. Therefore, Simpson does NOT have the structural features of the wing panes slope down.

The Examiner recite time and again that "the top portion of each element 111 slopes downwardly" and that "the top surface of each wing panel in Simpson et al. is sloped downwardly from the back side of the main body towards the interior of the cassette", but not point out the clear origin in Simpson, and Applicant can not find explicate or implicate in

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specification or figures of Simpson. Although, in Simpson the shelf portions 180 seem to be sloped down from left to right in FIGS. 5 and 7, the illusion of the elevation views is appear due to the shape of the shelf portion 180 shown in FIG. 4, substantially, the shelf portions 180 is canted upward from web portion 186 (root) to edge portion 184 (free end).

As shown in FIG. 3 in conjunction with described in the paragraph [0018] of the specification, "the wing panels 15 slope down, that is to say, if a lower surface of each wing panel 15 is horizontal, thickness of each wing panel 15 gradually become thinner from (a) root of each wing panel to (a) free end of each wing panel 15, so thickness of each protrusion is thinnest...", furthermore, according to the function of the supporting plates with the structure disclosed therein, the wing panels must be slope down from a root towards a free end in use.

Generally, unless a special explanation, a brief description that an element with a free end slope down or up should be considered that the element slope down or up from a root towards the free end thereof, so according to this convention, each wing panel described in Claim 1 should be slope down from a root thereof towards a free end thereof.

Therefore, independent Claim 1 is believed to be patentable over Simpson et al. '672.

Dependent Claims 2-5 are believed to patentable since they depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1.

Additionally, Claim 8 defines that a cassette defined therein comprises a pair of frames and a pair of supporting plates fixed to the frames, and the wing panels of the supporting plates slope down. However, the upward cant of shelf portions 180 that Simpson disclosed

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provide a continuous wafer contact surface along the entire edge portion 184 of shelf portion 180 (described in the paragraph [0025] of the specification in Simpson), is not slope down from roots (web portions) towards free ends (edge portion) as wing panels disclosed by applicant but is canted slightly upward from web portion 186 to edge portion. Thus, the wing panels defined in claim 8 are substantially different from the shelf portions of Simpson. Therefore, Claim 8 is believed to be patentable over Simpson et al. '672.

Dependent Claims 9-12 are believed to patentable since they depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 8.

For the similar reasons as Claim 1, Claims 17-19 are also believed to be patentable.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 6, 7 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Simpson et al.'672.

Claim 6 defines that the stiff shafts are made of metal, however, the most preferred material for reinforcing rods 154 that Simpson disclosed is polyethylethylketone (PEEK, described in the paragraph [0023] of the specification in Simpson). Thus, the stiff shafts defined in claim 6 are substantially different from the reinforcing rods of Simpson.

Additionally, for the above reasons, Claims 1 and 8 is believed to be patentable. So dependent Claims 6-7 and 13-16 are believed to patentable since they depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claims 1 and 8 respectively.

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In view of the above claim amendments and remarks, the subject application is believed to be in a condition for allowance and an action to such effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Huang et al.

By: 

Wei-Te Chung

Registration No.: 43,325

Foxconn International, Inc.

P. O. Address: 1650 Memorex Drive,

Santa Clara, CA 95050

Tel No.: (408) 919-6137